

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3721

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

CINCSO

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2191

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DR

SUBJ: THE CRISIS WINDS DOWN

REF: SD 2132

1. JUST ONE WEEK AFTER PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S SURPRISE APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL NEIT NIVAR SEIJAS AS CHIEF OF POLICE TRIGGERED A MAJOR POLITICAL CRISIS, TENSIONS HAD EASED AND PRESIDENT WAS OBVIOUSLY FULLY IN COMMAND. JOINT RESIGNATIONS OF SECRETARY OF STATE OF ARMED FORCES AND ALL THREE SERVICE CHIEFS ON MAY 9 MARKED HIGH POINT OF THE CRISIS AND WERE FOLLOWED BY PERIOD OF CAUTIOUS BUT SERIOUS CONSULTATIONS AND MANEUVERS. WHETHER FOR LACK OF WILL OR INABILITY TO COMMAND WIDE ENOUGH SUPPORT OR BOTH, THESE LEADERS MADE NO MOVE TO DEPOSE THE PRESIDENT. THERE IS, OF COURSE, ALWAYS POSSIBILITY OF SOME INDIVIDUAL, UNTOWARD ACTION OR OTHER UNEXPECTED TURN TO THE EVENTS. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE CRISIS HAS PASSED AND PASSIONS HAVE FLAGGED TO EXTENT THAT MILITARY IN OPPOSITION TO BALAGUER NO LONGER HAVE POWER TO REGENERATE THEM.

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2. PRESIDENT HAS COME THROUGH THIS FIRST MILITARY CRISIS OF HIS NINE YEARS OF OFFICE WITH INCREASED STRENGTH. BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER PEAK OF CRISIS HE MOVED CAREFULLY TO SHORE UP SUPPORT AND SIDELINE OPPOSITION AND AT NO TIME APPEARED TO LOSE HIS COOL. EVEN OPPOSITION POLITICAL PRESS HAD PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT'S PERFORMANCE. CONTRIBUTING TO PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM WAS GENERALLY RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF MILITARY LEADERS. THEIR PERFORMANCE ALSO REAPED PRAISE OF EDITORIALISTS AND COLUMNISTS. ALL IN ALL, THIS APPEARS TO BE PERSONAL VICTORY OF PRESIDENT BUT WITH FAVORABLE IMPLICATIONS FOR CIVILIAN SUPREMACY AND VIABILITY OF CONSTITUTION.

3. PRESIDENT DEMONSTRATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO USE FULL AUTHORITY AT HIS COMMAND TO MEET DIRECT CHALLENGE TO HIS POWER BUT ONCE HAVING OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES HE RETURNED TO HIS MORE CUSTOMARY STYLE OF GOVERNING BY BALANCING, NEGOTIATING, TEMPORIZING. HE USED LISTIN DIARIO EDITOR RAFAEL HERRERA, AS DID OUTGOING MILITARY HEADERS, AS MODERATING GO-BETWEEN IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN DIALOG AND DEFUSE SITUATION.

4. THE FOUR TOP MILITARY LEADERS WHO RESIGNED -- JIMENEZ, PEREZ Y PEREZ, LOGRONO AND LLUBERES MONTAS -- WERE IDENTIFIED IN PUBLIC MIND AS AMONG THE MOST CONSPICUOUSLY CORRUPT IN THE SECURITY SERVICES. FOR SOME OF THEM, OSTENTATION IN HOMES, CARS AND BUSINESS INTERESTS SEEMED ALMOST A WAY OF LIFE. THEIR REMOVAL FROM TOP POSITIONS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROVOKE PUBLIC SENTIMENT THAT AT LEAST THIS BAND OF CROOKS IS OUT.

5. IN SUMMARY, PRESIDENT HAS FACED UP SQUARELY TO CRISIS HE HIMSELF HELPED CREATE AND HAS CONFIRMED HIMSELF AS UNRIVALLED SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTRY. THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT THE DISSIDENT MILITARY WILL RECONSTITUTE A THREAT TO HIM AND TO THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL STABILITY.
HURWITCH

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